

16
PUBLIC HEALTH ACT,

(11 & 12 Vict., cap. 63).

REPORT

TO THE

GENERAL BOARD OF HEALTH

ON A

Further ~~PRELIMINARY INQUIRY~~

As to the Boundaries which may be most advantageous

~~INTO THE SEWERAGE, DRAINAGE, AND SUPPLY OF~~

~~WATER, AND THE SANITARY CONDITION~~

~~OF THE INHABITANTS~~

adopted for

~~THE~~ THE DISTRICT OF

BURNHAM.

By T. WEBSTER RAMMELL, Esq.,

SUPERINTENDING INSPECTOR.



LONDON:

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FOR HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

1851.

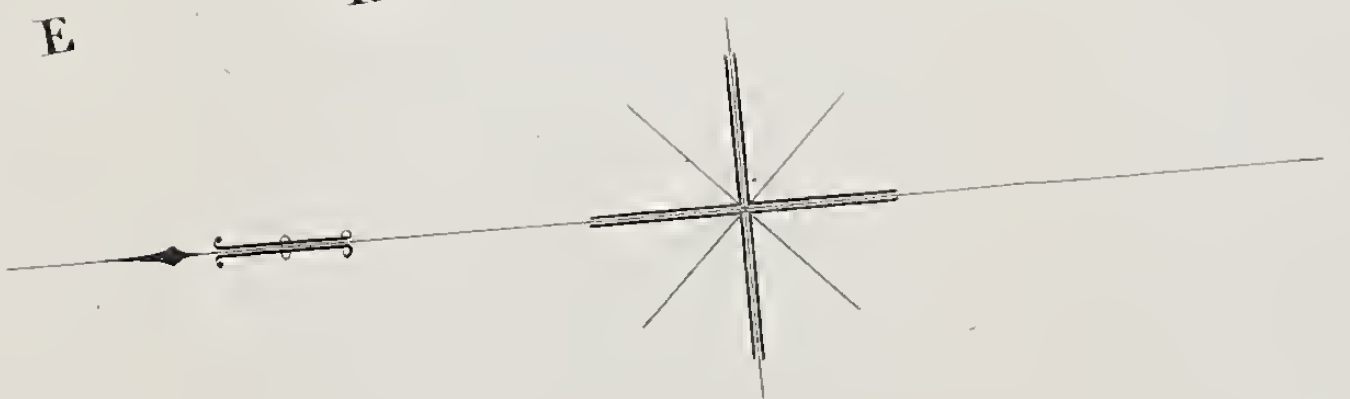
NOTIFICATION.

THE General Board of Health hereby give notice, in terms of section 9th of the Public Health Act, that on or before the written statements may be forwarded to the Board with respect to any matters contained in or omitted from the accompanying Report on a further Inquiry held in the District of BURNHAM, in the County of Somerset, in consequence of the proposed Alteration of Boundary for the purposes of the Public Health Act, 1848 ; or with respect to any amendment to be proposed therein.

By order of the Board,
HENRY AUSTIN, *Secretary.*

Gwydyr House, Whitehall,
1851.

SOUTH BENT PARISH
BERRON PARISH



Scale 6 Chains to an Inch.

PLAN OF PART
OF THE
PARISH OF BURNHAM,
IN THE
COUNTY OF SOMERSET,

Shewing the proposed restricted Boundary of the
District for the purposes of the Public Health Act.

1848.



Note. The line dotted thus -----
indicates the Proposed Boundary.



PUBLIC HEALTH ACT (11 & 12 Vict., cap. 63).

Report to the General Board of Health, on a further Inquiry as to the Boundaries which may be most advantageously adopted for the District of BURNHAM, in the County of Somerset, for the purposes of the Public Health Act. BY T. WEBSTER RAMMELL, Esq., Superintending Inspector.

4, Trafalgar Square, January 16, 1851.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to inform you that in accordance with your instructions I have held a further inquiry at Burnham, with a view to determine the line of boundary proper to be adopted on the proposed limitation of the district at present constituted for the purposes of the Public Health Act.

The meeting took place at the Clarence Hotel, in the town of Burnham, on the 11th ultimo, and was very numerously attended. Amongst those assembled were the Rev. T. Williams, Vicar of Burnham; Mr. George Reed, Chairman of the Local Board; Mr. Thwaites, one of the magistrates for the county; Mr. John Allen; Mr. John Board; Mr. Edward Saunders; Mr. B. T. Allen, Clerk to the Local Board; Mr. Ambrose Adams; Mr. John Adams; Mr. Chadwick, Surgeon; Mr. Walter Board, Surgeon; Mr. Hawkins; Mr. G. Duckett; Mr. G. Tucker; Mr. Johns; and Mr. Buncombe. Mr. Hobbs, solicitor of Wells; Mr. Gabriel Poole, solicitor of Bridgwater (who attended on behalf of the landowners); Mr. Symons, solicitor of Axbridge, and Mr. Edwards, agent for the Galton estate, were also present.

Having proved the proper publication and affixing of the Notices, I read to the meeting the memorials upon which your Honourable Board had directed this further inquiry to be made; which memorials are three in number; one being from owners of land in the parish, another from occupiers of land in the parish, and the third from rate-payers of Highbridge.

The memorial of the owners of land (received 25th May last) bears the signatures of 86 persons, owning together 2,268A. OR. 37P.; and is as follows:—

To the Right Honourable Lord Seymour, President of the Board of Health.

The undersigned owners of land lying within the parish of Burnham, respectfully beg your Lordship's consideration of the circumstances, in which they are placed in consequence of the recent formation of the said parish of Burnham into a district under the

powers of the Act for promoting the public health. Your petitioners beg to inform your Lordship that the parish of Burnham consists of a large agricultural district, five miles long, and three broad, consisting principally of dairy land; that such district forms part of a very extensive alluvial flat, called the South Marsh, comprising within its limits many parishes; that the South Marsh is divided into and forms two natural areas for agricultural drainage, the one having an outlet by the river Axe, the other by the River Brue. That the drainage of both these districts is regulated and managed by the Commissioners of Sewers for the county of Somerset, under the powers of the General Sewers Act, and also of Acts for improving the drainage of the rivers Axe and Brue respectively; and that the landowners would prefer leaving the management of the drainage of the parish of Burnham under the said Commissioners, to placing it under the control of the Local Board of Health; that it would neither be wise nor practicable (except at great and unnecessary expense) to improve the agricultural drainage of the parish of Burnham without simultaneously improving the drainage of other parishes, and using and interfering with the drains under the jurisdiction of the Commissioners of Sewers; and that for either of such purposes the concurrence of the Commissioners would be absolutely necessary. That the town of Burnham is a small watering-place, lying on one side of the parish, immediately adjoining the sea, and is, as your petitioners admit, much in want of ordinary sewers for the houses therein. That the hamlet of Highbridge, consisting of only 49 houses, lies also on one side of the parish immediately adjoining the river Brue, at a distance of more than a mile from the town of Burnham, and the inhabitants are adverse to the extension of the district to that hamlet; that no other part of the parish contains a sufficient number of adjacent houses to admit of any but local drainage for individual houses, for which no powers by legislative enactment are required; that the natural and cheapest mode of draining the town of Burnham is directly into the sea, and that no difficulty whatever would exist in limiting the district for sanitary purposes to the town of Burnham; whilst at the same time such an arrangement would meet the wishes of all reasonable persons in the parish. That inasmuch as a very large portion of the salaries and other general expenses of the Local Board will fall on the landowners, they will be obliged in their own defence to exercise the powers given to them, and to elect members of the Local Board from among themselves, although they will have no interest whatever in the works to be executed by such Local Board.

Your Petitioners, therefore, pray your Lordship to reconsider the boundaries which have been fixed for the district of Burnham, and to obtain such a re-arrangement of the same as will confine them to the town of Burnham alone.

The memorial of the occupiers of land (received the same day) is signed by 67 persons, holding in the aggregate 2,442A. 2R. 28P.; and is substantially a counterpart of the preceding.

The memorial of the rate-payers of Highbridge (received 13th July last) is signed by 42 persons, and is as follows:—

To the Right Honourable Lord Seymour, President of the Board of Health.

The undersigned rate-payers of Highbridge, in the parish of Burnham, respectively beg to memorialize your Lordship against being united with the town of Burnham, for the purposes of the public Health Act. Your petitioners, therefore, beg to inform your Lordship that Highbridge is situate one mile and a half from the town, and that it contains only 49 houses, nearly all of which are detached, and many are scattered over a distance of half a mile, and that no lodging-houses are within the district. Your petitioners beg leave further to state that many of them were induced to sign the petition for the purpose of your Inspector coming down under the impression and upon the representation that the operation of the Act would be confined to the town alone, and which they humbly conceive is the only part of the parish that require such drainage, and to which it can only be judiciously and properly applied; and as your petitioners understand that the settlement of the boundary is now under your Lordship's serious consideration, they respectfully hope that the district might be confined to the town alone, where your petitioners believe it was originally intended, being quite satisfied that the powers given to the Board of Guardians are sufficient to promote the health and cleanliness of the inhabitants in all parts of the parish, except the town itself.

Mr. Hobbs stated, that in common with most of the inhabitants of Burnham, he was ignorant of the contents of the above documents. He complained of the secrecy observed by the memorialists, and of this inquiry having been directed upon *ex-parte* statements. He considered that great hardship and injustice would be inflicted upon the inhabitants of Burnham if the boundary were to be limited to the town alone. The establishment charges he thought would be heavier than so small a place could bear.

Mr. Poole enforced the views of the landowners, and maintained that the boundary ought to be restricted, and that the limits of the town would be the proper boundary of the district.

I explained that the limitation of the boundary had already been determined upon by your Honourable Board, whose intentions in this respect had been formally communicated to the memorialists, and that the only question before me related to the extent to which such limitation should be carried.

Mr. Reed, Mr. Allen, Mr. Adams, Mr. Johns, Mr. Symons, and Mr. Dodd, then addressed me, the last named protesting against the Pillsmouth and the Colony estates being included.

I exhibited the map on which the line of boundary proposed by Mr. Poole is described, and then adjourned for the purpose of walking over and examining the ground; in which perambulation I was accompanied by a large number of those assembled at the meeting.

On resuming, Mr. Reed, the Chairman of the Local Board, stated that little or nothing had been done by that body for the improvement of the condition of the district. Great want of unanimity existed amongst the members, who in fact were nearly equally divided into a town party and a country party, opposed to each other. A clerk had been appointed with a salary of 50*l.* a-year, but neither surveyor, inspector of nuisances, nor officer of health had been named; nor had any survey been commenced. Plans for the drainage of the town had been advertised for at a premium of 20*l.*, and three designs sent in, which had been under the consideration of the Local Board, although no decision had been come to respecting them. A few nuisances had been removed, but beyond this nothing in the way of improvement had been done under the powers of the Act.

A rate of 6*d.* in the pound, which would produce about 167*l.*, had been passed, and was in course of being levied. Of this sum about 106*l.* would be contributed by houses, orchards, and tithes; and the remaining 61*l.* by the land.

Mr. Reed added that typhus fever had visited the town with great severity during the last summer, and that besides carrying off many victims, this scourge had inflicted much injury upon the trade of the place, by either driving away visitors or deterring them from coming.

No person desiring to be heard further, I concluded the inquiry.

The conclusion at which I have arrived is, that the restricted boundary proper, under the circumstances, to be adopted, is that indicated by the dotted line upon the accompanying map, which is a copy, upon a reduced scale, of a portion of the survey made for the commutation of the tithes. This line where it crosses the parish follows existing fences, and is as nearly parallel with the shore line as the irregularities of these divisions or subdivisions of property will allow it to be. The total area comprised within the restricted limits is about 645 acres.

According to Mr. Buncombe, a sixpenny rate levied on the proposed district would produce,—

	Rateable Value.	£	s.	d.
From houses	£ 2,060, at 6 <i>d.</i>	51	10	0
From orchards	£50, at 6 <i>d.</i>	1	5	0
From tythes	£128, at 6 <i>d.</i>	3	4	0
From arable and meadow land	£1,020, at 1½ <i>d.</i>	1	7	6
Together		£62	6	6

This sum would probably be sufficient to meet the reduced establishment charges of the new Board.

I have the honour to be,

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Your very obedient Servant,

T. WEBSTER RAMMELL,

Superintending Inspector.

To the *General Board of Health,*
 &c. &c.

